

## Democrat

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## TWO ESTIMATES OF LEE.

Tuesday of this week, January 19, was the 102nd anniversary of the birthday of Robert E. Lee and it was observed as a legal holiday in Florida and a number of other Southern States. The language of highest eulogy has been so often employed in analyzing the character and career of General Lee that to say more would almost necessarily be the repetition of what has been already said. The man himself was almost incomparable in the full-orbed strength and splendor of his character, and the whole English-speaking world has come to look upon him as one of the very greatest products of the race and to bracket him in history with that other Virginia rebel, George Washington. It is right to recall Lee's virtues and his genius on these recurring anniversaries of his birthday, for great human examples are among the priceless legacies of history and no finer model could be offered to the youth of any land than that furnished by the personality of this illustrious man. We select two recent opinions of him, one from a former foe dealing with him purely as a soldier, and the other from the Times-Union, as interesting contributions to the subject. The Times-Union says:

"Lee was the greatest English-speaking general that ever commanded an army. He is often considered a defensive strategist—the man who in nearly every battle made the attack and forced the fighting. He fought only two great battles on the defensive. In the others he attacked. He never lost an important battle—only at Gettysburg and Antietam was he checked, and in neither of these was he defeated. Lee was great as a general, but as a well-rounded character without fault or foible he was the first gentleman of history. Even in the bitter days of civil war the enemies of the South conceded the loftiness of his character."

Major Eben Swift, of the general staff of the United States army in discussing Lee at the recent meeting of the American Historical Association, said:

"Lee was the only general of Napoleon's type who ever lived, and whether greater or not, who shall say? Of all great soldiers no one but Lee probably encountered as dangerous an adversary as Grant. Napoleon yielded at last to smaller odds and his disaster was complete, but Lee's army at the end of the Wilderness campaign was as aggressive and high-spirited as ever. Lee made five campaigns in a single year; no other man and no other army ever did as much. Napoleon's 'lucky star' often brought victory which his combinations had not prepared, and saved him from disaster which he had not foreseen. It will be hard to find where luck and good fortune ever retrieved a mistake of Lee, or where the happy inspiration of a subordinate ever gave him victory or saved him a defeat."

Not under any circumstances would we exchange places with the unfortunate John D. Rockefeller and consent to pack his frightful burden of a billion dollars after reading the following harrowing details concerning that hideous mountain of lucre, carefully compiled by the Tallahassee True Democrat:

"The newspapers are printing the statement that John D. Rockefeller is worth a billion dollars. Comparatively few have a just conception of what a billion means. No man is able to count it. You will count 160 or 170 a minute. But let us suppose you go up as high as 200 a minute, hour after hour. At that rate you would count 12,000 an hour, 288,000 a day, or 105,120,000 a year. To count a billion would require a person to count 200 a minute for a period of 9,512 years, 342 days, 5 hours and 20 minutes, providing he should count continuously. But suppose we allow the counter twelve hours daily for rest, eating and sleeping; then he would need 19,025 years, 319 days, 10 hours and 40 minutes in which to complete the task."

Sam Russ, the once brilliant newspaper man whose strong and scholarly work as theatrical critic and commentator on passing events adorned the columns of the Times-Union for several years, and who was well known in newspaper and political circles throughout Florida, was found dead in his bed in a Jacksonville lodging house Sunday morning, and the people of the house didn't know whom he was until his body was identified by a Times-Union reporter. Truly a melancholy end for so bright a man who had won so high a place in the journalism of our State! Sam was a true citizen of Bohemia, one of that thriftless but generous class which hoards neither its genius nor its coin and scatters both alike in the

spirit of the proverbial "flying in wait for us all and so many of us are caught shivering and shelterless. Sam Russ was a Boston man, with the characteristic culture, temperament and mental edge of the people of his native city. He came to Florida with his brother about thirty years ago, and lived here until his death. The bond of affection between the two (both unmarried), was very strong, and when his brother was accidentally drowned on the East Coast about a year ago Sam was overwhelmed with grief and seemed to have little care for his future after that tragic event. His death removes a notable figure from our journalism, for although he had been connected with no paper for several years, his reputation was made as a writer on the Florida press and he left an impress too deep to be soon forgotten.

Georgia has troubles of her own with her pardoning authority very similar to those brought upon the people of Florida by our own blessed pardoning board up at Tallahassee. The Valdosta, Ga. Times says:

"Fifty-six man-slayers turned out of the penitentiary through the process of executive clemency during the year 1908 are the figures furnished us from the records at Atlanta. The blood-stained criminals already in were released as fast as the new ones were brought in. Is it any wonder that life is cheap in Georgia?"

Men who are disposed to minutely analyze human motives and go into the questions of heredity and environment when considering a convict's application for pardon backed up by the vigorous plea of an attorney and with the cause of the State unrepresented, can come pretty nearly finding excuse enough for any crime committed to turn the criminal loose. And if this rule is to prevail, as it seems to in Georgia, with Florida a close second, it is high time that society were looking out for some new and better means to protect itself against its criminal element than our present system. When a criminal is caught and fairly tried and convicted it is the quality of justice that should determine his future—not the quality of mercy. No matter how much heredity and environment may excuse his crime in an academic discussion of his case, it is the business of the courts and the boards of pardon to protect society against him, and that is certainly not done by turning him loose to let heredity and environment prompt him to further crime.

## The Florida Press

WILL NOT BE GOOD ROADS.

The Times does not want to butt in discouragingly, but as it notices that sundry counties are contracting to have good roads built for \$500 and \$600 per mile, it feels impelled to say that when such roads are built they will not be good roads.—Tampa Times.

CULTIVATING THE LADIES.

Hon. "Jeemes" Alexander, of Florida in general, paid this office a visit Wednesday. Mr. Alexander believes in woman suffrage and he says in four years' time he expects the women of Florida to make him governor. He has chosen a woman to be his private secretary, and promised offices to various other representatives of the coming sovereign power, so it needless for the hitherto monopolizing masculine element to bother their heads about putting up a rival candidate.—Tallahassee True Democrat.

HITTING THE PENSION LAW.

It is hoped that Governor Gilchrist will see some way to recommend in his message to the legislature a measure that will reduce the heavy state taxation. The state tax is simply outrageously high. That pension law enacted by the last legislature should be repealed. We believe that every needy confederate veteran should be taken care of by the state, but under the present law a poor widow is taxed to furnish a pension to a person who could buy her out ten times. We say that this is unjust and the law should be amended so as to tax the people for a pension fund only for the needy.—DeLand Record.

IT IS UP TO THE COUNTIES.

State School Superintendent Holloway expresses his belief that the counties of Florida will continue to support their schools during the standard term of eight months without the state aid recently pronounced unconstitutional by the supreme court. The counties have been advancing money to the schools during the period that the State failed

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to extend aid, and this practice must necessarily be continued until some permanent enactment of relief is made by the legislature. As the laws now stand, the counties alone can make legal appropriations for this purpose and it is up to them to keep the schools going.—Tampa Tribune.

WILL MAKE A STRONG RACE.

Hon. L. E. Roberson, of Live Oak, is announced by his home paper, the Live Oak Democrat, as a candidate for speaker of the house at the convening of the legislature in April. Other candidates are Syd L. Carter, of Gainesville, Ion L. Farris, of Jacksonville, and James E. Alexander, of Volusia county. Mr. Roberson is a strong man, well fitted by nature and training to acceptably discharge the duties of the high office to which he aspires, and we are rather inclined to the opinion that his candidacy will give the other candidates something to think about. Mr. Roberson will make a strong race and the probability is that he will be "Mr. Speaker" of the next house.—Madison Enterprise and Recorder.

DON'T BURN OVER THE FIELDS.

It has been told the farmer a million times that he was destroying his best friend in burning the trash off his fields to make plowing easier, but he still goes on, at least those who think they know more than science, and because of their vainglory and stupidity, will continue, with their nose to the grindstone until they cease to burn. But thanks to an appreciative and enlightened understanding there are now thousands of farmers who do not burn their fields, and it is those who permit nature to assist them in restoring fertility to their fields that are the prosperous farmers of the land and have bank accounts. But these deserve it. Why won't the experience of some men, especially when it is experience to the good, cause other men in the same line of business to profit by it?—Ocala Star.

IS BASED ON IGNORANCE.

The greatest obstacle to be overcome in the matter of inducing northern immigration to Florida is in the imagination of northern people that, as it warm down here in winter, it must be correspondingly hot in Florida in summer. It is natural for them to reason that the range of temperature here must be as great as it is where they live. They do not understand that one of their death-dealing days in New York or Chicago is hotter than a day on the Equator. Yet Prof. Drummond proved that in one of his books. The fact is, if the range of temperature were as great in Florida as, say in New York, hardly anyone could live here the year round, basing it on the winter range of temperature. In some years the range of temperature in those parts is nearly or quite 120 degrees. Think of a summer temperature of 115 degrees or

therabout in Florida! Yet that would correspond to the extreme range in New York or Chicago in a year's time. If the exact maxima and minima of temperature in Florida for any year, or even for any summer, could be published and spread broadcast in the North it would overcome this prejudice founded on imagination which is again based on ignorance.—Short Talks in Times-Union.

DON'T FORGET THE OTHERS, GOVERNOR.

Well, Governor, do not forget the "other boys" who wrote and "fit" so hard for you when votes were needed. It was right to remember Bro. Jordan, but while you are honoring him you must not forget there are others. Among the safe and sane political saints there are Wallace Stovall, of the Tampa Tribune, Willis M. Ball, of the Times-Union, and Brother Tommas. That other valiant knight of pencil and pad, John LeFontisee, has already been rewarded by Senator Taliaferro with the fat gum job. The brilliant paragraphist with his Lake City Index points as naturally to Tallahassee as the needle to the pole. Then, among the "publicans and sinners" you must not overlook those loyal friends of "personal liberty"—Allan Rogers and Joe Ehrmann. What stunts the first did through the Times-Union, and the other prince of good fellows on the road did not forget you! To the victors belong the crumbs and plums.—Arcadia News.

JUST AS STAPLE AS COTTON.

"What are you going to do down there?" asked an Atlanta friend, who is a large wholesale grocery merchant, of the present editor of the True Democrat, as he was coming to Florida a year ago. "Guess I will try truck farming," was the answer. "Don't do it," was the reply. "It is too uncertain. But raise cane and make syrup and ship the product to me. I will buy every gallon you can make and at a profitable price." We took our own advice and lost out. Had we followed the counsel of our friend we would perhaps have been in a much better condition financially. The editor of the True Democrat was reared in South Georgia and has attended cane grindings in all the cane grinding states, but has never seen finer cane than that grown on the soil of Leon county. The growth is larger, and the saccharine matter in the stalk greater than usually found. Tallahassee would consequently be a fine location for a large syrup refinery. We are told that the syrup product of an acre in this county is from 200 to 500 gallons. If the farmers would concentrate their energies on this crop they would find it much more profitable than cotton growing. And syrup is just as staple a product as cotton.—Tallahassee True Democrat.

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It is impossible for ex-Editor Jordan to suppress his originality even after he flings away his trusty faber and picks up the thingumbob with which he is to stir our rations and determine the quality of our grub in virtue of his office of State pure food inspector. He writes to the Punta Gorda Herald from Tallahassee and after making a well-plea for the considerate judgment of the people upon the acts of the board of pardons, adds this suggestion: "I respectfully suggest, also, that the Times-Union, the Tampa Tribune and the Pensacola Journal combine and engage a thoroughly competent man at a good salary to stay in Tallahassee all time and send them full and complete, simultaneous and identical reports of all that is transpiring in the capital. To such a man all the records of all the boards and departments are always open, and his reports properly prepared and sent out would be read with keen interest throughout the State. They would prevent all the newspapers from making the error of criticizing public officials on unjust grounds and discrediting them in the estimation of the people."

Excellent, but impracticable! It might work in Utopia, but not in Florida. The three admirable papers mentioned might stick together for awhile in their perfect concurrence of opinion respecting the administration in power, but when they came to the parting of ways, as would be inevitable, judgment by the past, think of the that unfortunate correspondent would not serve three passing opinions, for the passion would each insist on a view who could make his news views. And this, too, without impeaching their good faith or sincerity, for the same set of facts filtered through different minds may result in directly opposite opinions and convictions. We need go no further back than the Broward administration and note the relations of our three morning dailies to it to see how impracticable is the well-meant suggestion of Mr. Jordan. It was ever thus and always will be until the lion and the lamb lie down together with the lamb outside the lion.